

FINANCE & UTILITY COMMISSION MEETING
Wednesday, April 28, 2021, 5:00 PM

The Committee meeting was convened at 5:00 p.m. by Mayor Nathan Brown. Those present included: Mayor Nathan Brown, Council Members John Dayton and Vaughn Ripley, Commission Members Syree Williams, Tom Smith, and Brian Keller, and staff members Dave Dunn, Carrie Myers, John Gerstner, Matt Campbell, Jeremy Mose, Bruce Dell, Abby Ingram, and Rikki Bruchey.

WB Tower Move Contract

Mr. Dunn discussed this item, which was the official contract from Wolfe House Movers to move the WB Tower. The contracted quote was for \$22,000. The Commission recommended approval to the Mayor and Council.

Sports Complex Concept Discussion

Mr. Dell presented the concept plan for the entire Sports Complex projects including sports fields, parking, drive lane, etc. He discussed costs to date, future potential costs, grant funding, and likely phases of this four to five year project. The Commission recommended forwarding this item for discussion and concept approval to the Mayor and Council.

Sidewalks Discussion

Ms. Ingram discussed challenges staff is encountering with administering the sidewalk loan retrofit program. Staff found that each sidewalk was unique and some presented fairly significant challenges related to stormwater management, curb and gutter, abutting neighbor sidewalks, retaining walls, etc. Staff thought it might make more sense to look at the sidewalk replacement project holistically, rather than individually. Staff recommended looking at the specific deficiency areas identified previously including Safe Routes to School areas and other network gap areas, and having the City tackle replacement of sidewalks in these areas.

Mayor Brown stated the sidewalk loan program could be kept for individual projects that easily met program criteria without doing adverse damage to abutting properties, but stated he wished Council would adopt a formal five-year sidewalk replacement plan and commit to funding. He suggested funding a portion of the project with a System Benefit Fee. The Commission recommended forwarding this item for discussion to the Mayor and Council.

System Benefit Fee

Mr. Dunn discussed this item. Several municipalities have enacted a similar fee which is paid through quarterly utility bills, and is earmarked for specific purposes. He stated while water and sewer rate increases help cover operational costs, fees collected from the system benefit would be spent on capital projects. The Commission discussed enacting a \$30 per quarter fee in FY22, with \$20 going to the enterprise fund and \$10 going to sidewalk retrofits. The Commission recommended forwarding this item to the Mayor and Council for approval.

Water & Sewer Rates

Mr. Dunn discussed this item. The recommendation for FY22 was a 2% increase to both water and sewer rates. He stated if a modest rate increase was not adopted this year, a larger increase

would need to be adopted next fiscal year. Mr. Dayton pointed out that the inflation rate is 2.5%, thus a 2% rate increase made sense. The Commission recommended including a 2% rate increase to both water and sewer in the FY22 budget.

FY2021 Budget – General, Enterprise

Mr. Dunn discussed this item. He stated both budgets were currently somewhat balance at \$0, however, some items would still be changing such as the water and sewer rate increase, the system benefit fee, etc.

Mayor Brown stated the fire and ambulance companies both receive \$15,000 from the City as a contribution annually, but the City also pays the water bill for those locations. He stated because the fire company now has paid staff through Frederick County, he felt Frederick County should assume their water bill. The Commission Members agreed. Mr. Dunn was going to reach out to the County to begin a conversation about this.